

# Alice Coachman

November 9, 1923 – July 14, 2014

## Goal-Setting



“I’ve always believed that I could do whatever I set my mind to do.” Alice Coachman

In 1948, Alice Coachman represented the American *Olympic* team in London. Coachman set a high jump record for the win making her the first African American woman to win an *Olympic* gold medal, receiving that award from King George VI. At the event, she looked towards the stands and saw her coach enthusiastically applauding for her, and then, she realized she had won.

After the *Olympics Games*, Coachman completed her degree at *Albany State College*. Although she was a retired athlete at that time, the Coca-Cola Company asked her to become a spokesperson making her the first African American to earn a paid endorsement.

Alice Coachman was born on November 9, 1923, in Albany, Georgia, and was one of 10 children in her family. Being raised in the segregated South, she was not able to train or compete in many organized sporting events. She excelled in spite of having to use old equipment and maintain her tenacity to succeed, exemplifying the **soft skill of goal-setting**. In high school the boy’s coach recognized her abilities and helped her become stronger. Barefooted, Coachman broke high school and college high jumping records in the *Amateur Athlete Union (AAU)* national championships. Coachman was offered a scholarship at the age of 16 to the *Tuskegee Institute* in Alabama. Although her parents were not initially supportive of an athletic schol-

arship at the age of 16, they eventually blessed their daughter’s goals.

In 1946, she enrolled in *Albany State College* as a national champion in not only high jump, but also 50-meter, 100-meter races and 400-meter relay race. She believed that she was probably at her peak form at that time and set her *Olympic* goals, but World War II caused the cancellation of both the 1940 and 1944 *Olympic Games*. Coachman continued to train in preparation to meet her goal of representing the United States on the *Olympic* team for the 1948 *Olympic Games*.

In her later life, Coachman created the *Alice Coachman Track and Field Foundation* to help young athletes as well as retired Olympians. During the 1996 *Summer Olympic Games* in Atlanta, she was honored as one of the 100 greatest Olympians in history. She was inducted into multiple hall of fames including the *National Track & Field Hall of Fame* (1975) and the *U. S. Olympic Hall of Fame* (2004).

Throughout her life she set goals and met them. Her legacy of goal-setting is astounding by any standard. Coachman died on July 14, 2014, at the age of 90 in a nursing home, where she was admitted after a stroke. Her achievements continue to motivate athletes today.

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